



Notes from Ad-hoc Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Hwy 99W Corridor Improvement & Management Plan

Date of Meeting: May 24, 2007
Name of Committee: CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Notes taken by: Ron Bunch, Long Range Planning Manager
Called to order by: Ron Bunch, Long Range Planning Manager
Location: City of Tigard, Town Hall Conference Room
Time Started: 6:30 pm
Time Ended: 9:00 pm

Members: Daniel Barnes, Jesse Black, Steve Boughton, Sue Carver, Tom Fergusson, Tim McGilvrey, William Moss, Roger Potthoff, Cherree Weeks, Rex Caffall, Paul Owen

Others Present: Alan Snook, DKS Associates; Ross Kevlin, ODOT

Staff Present: Gus Duenas, City Engineer; Ron Bunch, Long Range Planning Manager

Introductions

Meeting convened at 6:30pm

Presentation

Alan Snook began the meeting by stating what would be coming up.

He went over what had been spoken about previously. He said that looking at the overview project process – he noted that they’d done “existing conditions” back in November and “needs, opportunities, and constraints” in January. Back in April, they’d done the “concepts development” portion. Now, in May, he noted they would be looking at the “concepts evaluation and comparison.” He said the next step is going into the refinement, implementation and developing a final plan to take to City Council for this project. He said

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This meeting, in its entirety, is available on audio tape & retained for one year in the Permit Center.

they would be developing that refinement in June and then the process is the City taking it to the City Council. Gus Duenas, City Engineer, said they would be giving Council an update on this at the June 19th workshop session to let them know what the input has been from the three open houses that they'd had.

Mr. Snook went on to explain the following alternative concepts:

Concept A - the partial widening alternative: This concept widens from 5 lanes to 7 lanes from I-5 down to Greenburg Road and keeps and retains 5 lanes south of that down to Durham. He said they'd looked at localized capacity improvement south of Greenburg Road. They did the pedestrian improvements along the entire corridor – meaning the four foot landscape strip and eight foot sidewalk as well as 6 foot bicycle lanes along the entire corridor as well. A CAC member questioned the need of widening the sidewalk to 8 feet, which, ultimately affects how much land will be taken away from businesses. He said he rarely sees any pedestrians there. In addition – he questioned the use of a green strip of grass or planting strip as “protection.” Snook said it's the curb that provides a certain amount of safety. Not in the case of a fast moving vehicle but in the case of, perhaps, someone reaching for their cell phone and drifting to the side while going at a slower speed. He said the transit improvements in this concept looked at doing queue bypass lanes. (This is a lane available for transit and right turning vehicles at intersections, to be able to bypass queues at intersections. It saves time for transit travel. He said they did not look at queue bypass lanes into the seven lane facilities because that actually makes it a 9-lane facility and they felt it was too detrimental to the pedestrian environment. They looked at access management within the interchange areas – so 217 and I-5 on this concept – that's within 1320 feet (that's the ODOT standard for where they'd like to limit the amount of access and possibly closing some driveways.

Concept B – There is no seven-lane idea in this concept. It retained the 5-lane cross section. They looked at right sizing the intersections, making sure they could operate at acceptable levels. Pedestrian improvements and bicycle improvements, just like in concept A – the 8-foot sidewalk with 4-foot landscape strip, and 6-foot bicycle lane. There will be queue bypass lanes in about 5 locations. The focus will be on access management - trying to look at closing driveways, relocating driveways and putting landscaped medians in to help with the safety aspect as well.

Concept C – Seven-lane widening is extended down to Durham Road. This is the concept where the widening goes the whole way. Again – bike and pedestrian improvements are the same as A & C. Still right sizing intersections. If side streets need turn lanes, they would do that. This concept includes aggressive access management – possibly closing or relocating driveways, and putting landscaped medians in to help with the safety aspect. Additional access management area outside the interchange areas in this concept looked at closing driveways or consolidating driveways – somewhat similar to Concept B but not as aggressive.

Mr. Snook said the criteria they were looking at to evaluate these alternative concepts were:

1. Pedestrian Environment
2. Bicycle Environment
3. Transit Environment
4. Safety
5. Property and Building access

The question was asked 1. “To what degree do the aesthetics of the roadway factor in to the criteria.” And related to that 2. “To what degree do aesthetics have an impact on traffic?” The answer: Traffic calming studies show that a lot of what was previously assumed to calm traffic doesn’t really work to well. One thing that works really well are tall buildings in relation to the street. For example, in downtown Portland, buildings tower over the street and give a “tunnel like” appearance and most will not drive 55 through those areas. The other thing that slows folks down are turns in the road. He said something is to be said for aesthetics. There is a standard edge treatment and those edges can be landscaped nicely. He said landscaping did play a factor in the cost – they took that into consideration.

They went on to discuss trees and placement of trees. He noted there was a certain set back distance that needed to be met.

Also discussed were bike lanes. It was noted most will not want to ride bikes on Hwy 99W but some (bicyclist) commuters do just that. They need to be as safe as possible. They talked about the difference between the 3 concepts with regard to bike lanes.

There was discussion about queue bypasses. Concept A has 2 queue bypasses. Concept B has 5. Concept C has 4 bypasses. Question was asked “What is a queue bypass?” Answer: A queue bypass is – if you think of motor vehicles that queue up at a signalized intersection... a queue bypass is a separate dedicated thru-lane so vehicles can actually get through without stacking up waiting for those cars to turn but can actually get thru the intersection.

They talked about the difference between more lanes versus fewer lanes. The consultants stated that sometimes 2 lanes are more efficient than 3 lanes. There was discussion as to the difference between “efficiency” and “capacity” and how this idea can be true. They talked about the growing number of vehicles in Tigard and the possibility of transit speeds greatly slowing down due to that problem. The consultants discussed in what way the 3 different concepts could help with that problem.

They discussed how the bridge area, at present, is not adequate for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The consultants said that not any of these fixes would be a “silver bullet.” Nothing will completely “fix” the problems. They can just do the best they can do to help alleviate them.

There was a question, answer & comment time – a sampling of the questions/comments follow:

Question: “When you have these estimates of what’s going to happen 20 years from now... what kind of accuracy do we have here... plus or minus 20%? 30%? 50%?”

Answer: Generally speaking it’s 10 or 15% accuracy on the regional level.

Question: About Hwy 99W being widened to 7 lanes (Concept C) – especially in light of the I-5/99W Corridor. If concept C was selected to 7 lanes and Durham reconstructed to 5 lanes as a result and then 72nd Ave connecting to I-5 – Would it make it less likely for the region to seriously consider constructing the I-5/99W connector.

Answer: It’s highly unlikely the connector would not go through because of this change. It wouldn’t make the amount of difference that is really needed.

Question: Of the intersections – how many have problems with collisions?

Answer: There are about 4 or 5 intersections of the 20 have collision problems so about 25% have these problems. They are not collision problems as far as having a crash rate of over 1.0. These changes should make it a safer environment.

There was more discussion regarding safety on Hwy 99W.

There was talk of getting things right the first time. The importance of not having to “do over” down the line was stressed. The consultants said it’s hard to project completely accurately because when you’re talking about forecasting 20 years down the line, things can change. You can’t always anticipate everything. That said, they’ve not seen many “bad decisions.”

Comment: “As a citizen, I would hate to see you spending my money to do a half-*** job and then, later come back and say “Oooooops we forgot about light rail...oh well, we’ll just rip it all out and start over again...”

Answer: The improvements will not happen in one big chunk. It’s going to be an incremental project – done in phases. It might be that in the year 2012 – give or take a few years – maybe there will be some big decision to put light rail or bus rapid transit down Barbur / 99W but we haven’t been able to get anything definitive from TriMet. They’re busy working on other corridors. It’s very doubtful that by that time you guys would have proceeded too far down the road with construction. If you had and this gets built it’s just a matter of ripping out some sidewalks.

There was discussion about the difference (monetarily) between light rail and buses. There was also discussion about the pluses and minuses of using light rail.

The consultants spread out some maps and took the rest of the time to go over them to give the group a sense of what the 7-lane facility means. There was a time of comments and questions regarding the maps.

The meeting adjourned.